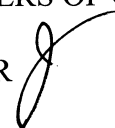


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 23, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES FOR DUKE STREET, PTO

ISSUE: Council consideration of several options to install traffic safety measures for Duke Street and PTO.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive this report. Staff is proceeding with the signage. Council should determine if it wishes to allocate \$50,000 at this time from the remaining balance in the King Street Pedestrian Capital account for the marginal pedestrian barriers described on page two.

BACKGROUND: This section of Duke Street is an arterial roadway serving approximately 40,000 vehicles per day, in addition to some 4,000 pedestrians crossing per day. Despite efforts coordinated among T&ES, Alexandria Police and PTO, the observed behavior includes pedestrians crossing at random mid-block locations and running through standing (and sometimes moving) traffic throughout the day.

DISCUSSION: The intersections in this area already have enhanced pedestrian features, including striped, well-marked crosswalks and pedestrian count-down signals with extended pedestrian crossing times.

Staff has queried other jurisdictions to determine successful and unsuccessful treatments that have been used to channelize pedestrian movements to signal-controlled intersections with existing pedestrian crossings. Physical means of channelization and mid-block crossing control were clearly determined to be the most effective means to control unsafe mid-block pedestrian crossing behavior.

Based on these findings and the desire to avoid any possible perception that the city is taking "pedestrian unfriendly" actions, staff recommends a three-step process in order to achieve the desired reduction in mid-block crossings of Duke Street between Diagonal Road/Dulaney Street and Reinekers/Holland Lanes. This process is:

Step 1: Signage and Pedestrian Education – Staff will immediately begin installation of signing along both sides of Duke Street directing pedestrians to cross only at marked crosswalks and informing pedestrians of the proper use of the pedestrian-actuated detectors in order to receive full crossing times. In addition, the city's new pedestrian/bicycle coordinator will work with the new wayfinding signing planner, to develop and implement a signage plan directing pedestrians to and encouraging use of the Duke Street pedestrian concourse. The estimated cost of this step is minimal.

Step 2: Marginal Pedestrian Barriers – In conjunction with Step 1, T&ES will coordinate with Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities to develop and install (following Council approval of funding) a system of physical barriers along each side of Duke Street to further discourage mid-block pedestrian crossings. The preferred approach will be to use street-side landscaping, either in a continuous planting strip or in raised planters to limit pedestrian access to mid-block crossing areas. The general cost estimate for this action is \$45,000 to \$50,000.

Step 3: Median Pedestrian Barrier – If acceptable results are not obtained through the preceding steps, staff proposes to install a continuous pedestrian barrier in the median of Duke Street that provides a positive physical restriction to mid-block crossings. The barrier that is envisioned in the event this final step is necessary would be a fencing system, similar in design and appearance to the barrier installed in the median of Duke Street in the vicinity of Ben Brenman Park and Beatley Library, that would positively limit pedestrian crossing opportunities to signalized intersection locations. In the event this step is determined to be necessary, staff will provide design details and cost estimates for review and approval before installation. The general cost estimate for this action is \$100,000 to \$150,000.

FISCAL IMPACT: While there have been no funds budgeted in the current or prior CIP's for this project, there is a remaining balance of about \$165,000 in the King Street pedestrian capital account. Funds in this account were approved by Council to improve pedestrian access on the north side of Duke Street to and from the King Street Metro Station. That project has been completed. Since the Duke Street pedestrian issue is directly related to the King Street pedestrian use, it seems appropriate to use the \$165,000 for Duke Street pedestrian purposes, and that is what staff recommends.

STAFF:

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